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THE ART

Base Running

—OF—

A BOOK OF IN-
STRUCTIONS FOR PRO-
FESSIONALS AND AMATEURS,
CONTAINING CLEAR AND CONCISE
DIRECTIONS FOR ACQUIRING A SCIEN-
TIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE ART.

BY

EDWARD J. PRINDLE,

AUTHOR OF

Reach's "Art of Curve Pitching" and "Art of Batting,"

AND

"The Art of Zigzag Curve Pitching."

Price, 15 Cents.

MILTON, CONN.:

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

1890.

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AND

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EDWARD J. PRINDLE, Milton, Conn.

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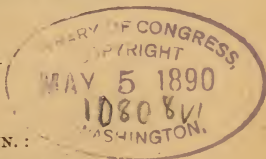
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Preface.

In presenting this work to the American public it is not my intention or desire to apologize for so doing. A few prefatory remarks, however, will, perhaps, not be considered out of place.

The science of Base Running seems to be growing in the favor of the more progressive class of base ball players of to-day. This is certainly a long step in the right direction. What is needed now are more steps in the same direction. It is with a view to helping forward the good work that this treatise on the Art has been written. The class of players which I desire to reach through these pages is chiefly the amateur class; but I believe that there are those among the professional part of the fraternity who can read them with profit to themselves. At all events it can do any such no harm to read this book even if it does them no good. In this, Fortune seems to favor the brave.

Completeness is not claimed for this work. No man living can write on any subject so exhaustively as to preclude the possibility of improvement, either by himself or someone else. This fact must be the authority for the old maxim, "Two heads are better than one if one of them *is* a cabbage-head."

Two years have elapsed since my "Art of Bating" was placed in the hands of the printer, and three years since my "Art of Curved Pitching" first made its appearance. Both of these works have apparently given good satisfaction if their popularity may be judged from their sales, which have amounted, in the case of the "Art of Curved Pitching" alone, to over sixteen thousand copies. It will be a source of intense gratification to me if this book meets with an equally favorable reception. Nothing gives an author more real pleasure than the knowledge of the appreciation of the public for his work. Pecuniary considerations are items of secondary importance.

To the reader, in conclusion, I will say: Remember that this subject furnishes a comparatively new field of operations for an author and for that reason be as charitable as you can in criticising the results of my labor. With this request I lay down the pen.

E. J. P.

Milton, Conn., Jan. 1, 1890.

Introduction.

From the time of the introduction of the curve in base ball playing until within a comparatively recent period it is safe, perhaps, to say that pitching has received more attention, especially from the amateur class of players, than all of the other departments of the game put together. We do not know why this is unless it is because the curve possesses a sort of fascination which creates an ardent desire in the mind of Young America to master what was once considered by many, and is even now considered by some, to be an incredible and impossible feat. Certain it is that the power to so direct the ball that it will turn in a graceful curve from a direct path without being influenced by any *visible* force, *does* possess a good deal of fascination for a mind that is philosophically inclined. To such a mind the curve is a beautiful problem and one which never loses its attraction. The members of an amateur team will look upon the expert curve pitcher with a sort of awe and veneration as if he belonged to a higher order of beings than themselves. No doubt the desire to secure this feeling of respect from his companions has been the direct and only cause for the excess of attention which many an ambitious amateur has given to the subject of curve pitching. But be this as it may it is evident that within the past two years the thinking class of base ball players have recognized the fact that pitching has claimed altogether too much of the attention of the profession at the expense, and to the serious detriment of Batting, Fielding, Base Running, etc., and are now turning their attention to these very important but neglected factors.

As an Art—requiring, as it does, the best of skill, coolness, and good judgment—Base Running, today, stands at the very head of the list. In no other department of the game—not excepting even that of Pitching—is so much coolness, daring, and correct calculation required as in Base Running. To be a successful base runner one must know *ex-*

actly what to do in many cases and also know just when to do it since an interval of a second or even half a second frequently decides the question of a runner making his base. He must be a quick and *accurate* calculator of time and distance or else he will hardly attain a very high degree of skill in the Art. Of course there are valuable auxiliaries but one must possess the requisites just mentioned in order that he may be thoroughly successful. Qualities which are weak or entirely lacking in an individual, are generally greatly improved or wholly supplied by practice, although a case is occasionally met with which seems to be an exception to the general rule. This, however, must be expected since they are found in all other occupations of life.

Advantages of Skillful Base Running.

As we have already intimated, Base Running has received considerable attention, especially from the professional class, during the past two years; and, judging the future from the recent past, it will continue to engage their attention for some time to come. It is also to be hoped that the amateur class will give it more serious study and attention than they have done heretofore. This last remark is not made to include every individual amateur player nor every amateur team, but amateurs as a class. Perhaps even among the professional class are individuals who could read these pages without detriment to themselves.

The advantages to a team to be derived from expert Base Running can hardly be overestimated. For example a player may be weak at the bat and enabled to make first base only through the failure of the catcher to hold the last strike—something of frequent occurrence in amateur games—but who, having reached first base, is enabled to complete the round of the others without difficulty and score his run by reason of his being an expert in Base Running. On the other hand of what particular advantage to a team is a player who, although

a safe and sure batsman, is regularly put out between bases on account of unskillful Base Running, except to let in men who are already on the bases? Of course good batting is an especially valuable feature of the game—no one will attempt to deny that:—but it must be supplemented by skillful Base Running. In these days of phenomenal pitching in which so many men are struck out it becomes absolutely necessary that the base runner should get around to third base as soon as possible, before three men are put out, in order to be in a position to take advantage of a short hit by the batsman and score his run. Many times a man on first base can only get to second on the hit by the batsman, or if he happened to be at second base be only able to reach third; whereas if he had been at third base when the hit was made he might easily have scored. This must account in a great measure for the small scores made by the professional teams of to-day. How often we read of their being held down to one or two runs and not infrequently shut out altogether. Now there is some reason for this. Of course it is because the first team was not sharp enough for the second or else because the second team was too sharp for the first. But where does the fault really lie? Is it not fair to suppose that it lies, in a great measure, in the Base Running? No one, it is true can do impossibilities: but does not the Base Running of to-day admit of the possibility of a good deal of improvement.

“How shall this be accomplished?” is the question which naturally follows. The object of this essay is to answer that question by discussing the essential points of the Art of Base Running and by pointing out what the base runner ought to do and also what he ought not to do. Therefore read on. We will try to advance a few ideas worthy of consideration.

Necessary Qualifications.

First on a list of arranged topics for discussion comes the above. It would be well, perhaps, to mention with considerable completeness what the

qualifications of a good base runner are. First he must be a quick and accurate judge of chances, time, and distance. This will enable him to tell just when it is time for him to run and in most cases to determine whether he can make the next base or not. As we have already stated, many a run is decided by a period of time not exceeding a second, or even half a second in many instances. An unthinking person may doubt this statement but it is capable of easy proof. The distance from one base to another is ninety feet. An expert runner ought to cover this distance in from three to three and one-half seconds, or at the rate of from twenty-five to thirty feet per second, and any good average runner ought to make it in from four to four and one-half seconds, or at the rate of from twenty to twenty-two and one-half feet per second. Now many a run is either won or lost by a much smaller distance than that which is represented by one-half of these figures, instances being frequent where men are declared out when within two, or even one foot of the base, or declared safe when the runner reached the base only a foot or two in advance of the ball. Now then what fractional parts of a second do *these* figures represent? We believe these to be fair statements which ought to furnish considerable food for reflection for the incredulous.

The qualification second in importance to the one just mentioned is a good pair of legs. It is absolutely necessary that one should possess these in order to excel. He may possess the requisite amount of good judgment but this will avail him little of itself in stealing bases if he is a poor runner. Fortunately one's running capacities improve by practice; therefore no one need despair on account of this weakness. No one can expect to be universally successful. The best of base runners miss their calculations occasionally. If a runner always waits until he is dead sure of making his base he will prove an expensive ornament to his team. We don't advocate rashness or foolhardiness; but we *do* advocate well-calculated boldness. The timid and indecisive base runner will stick to his base—afraid to run, yet knowing that he ought to—throwing away opportunity after op-

portunity to make the next base safely; while the base runner, who possesses boldness and decision among other good attributes, will take a good lead and at the first motion of the pitcher to deliver the ball to the bat will be off like a shot. Timidity is certainly one of the chief causes of poor Base Running to-day and anyone who desires to excel in this branch must change his tactics if he is afflicted with this unfortunate failing. On the other hand a person can go to the other extreme and be too bold. There is an intermediate line which separates these two extremes, which is, of course, just right; and in the ability to tell just where this line lies in each instance, lies one of the greatest secrets of the Art. In a majority of cases it is something which requires long study and practice to acquire. There are doubtless some cases—in this as well as in other vocations—where the faculty of always, or nearly always, doing the right thing at the right time, and that without previous preparation, seems to be born with a person. No one can dispute this. A person, therefore, who desires to excel in Base Running must exercise his best judgment to determine where this line lies; and when he is able to do this, that which is probably the greatest difficulty, is surmounted. What if he is put out a few times in thus practicing? Is it any worse than to be left on a base or to be forced off and then put out? The conscientious player will always play for the best interests of his team and not for an individual record. In our opinion it would be a good thing if the legislative branch of the profession would make a rule charging a player with an error every time he is left on a base. While this would, no doubt, seem rather unjust in many cases, yet on the whole we firmly believe that it would prove decidedly advantageous in the end, and that it would have a marked tendency to overcome this timidity of which we have just spoken and to stimulate base runners to greater exertions.

Another important factor in Base Running is *watchfulness*. If a runner lets his attention wander from his position through general negligence, conversation with a baseman, etc., he is quite likely to be thrown out at the base. Our private opin-

ion publicly expressed is that if the base runner exercises a proper degree of care, attention, and watchfulness there is very little danger of his being put out in this manner; and to the want of proper care and attention we charge so many "put outs" at bases.

Confidence is something the base runner should possess. Without it he will hardly succeed. It is an old maxim—applicable to nearly everything—that confidence is half the battle. If it is true in anything it is true in this. As we have already suggested, of what particular advantage is it to a base runner to be able to make a good hit and then, after reaching first or second base, hug it as he would his best girl, afraid to leave it for fear he may be thrown out at *that* base or for fear he may not be able to reach the *next* one. We fancy we hear such a person say "Nothing ventured, nothing lost." Kind reader, we cannot agree with you there. Are you playing for yourself or for your team? If for your own record, your answer may, in one sense of the word, be correct. If for the interests of your team, it is entirely wrong. Suppose you exercise a little more boldness, complete the round of the bases and score a run, are not both yourself and your team better off than if you had remained glued to that base until three men had been put out? We therefore beg leave to amend your quotation by saying "Nothing ventured, nothing won," and then you have it as it should be.

Coolness is akin to confidence although differing from it in some respects. Coolness shows up to its best advantage when its possessor gets into a tight corner such as being caught between bases. In such a case the base runner needs to keep his wits about him especially if he finds an expert baseman on each side of him. Our own personal experience is that, although we were not often caught thus, we were always more than ordinarily successful in extricating ourselves when we *were* caught. Our plan of operations will be fully discussed under the head of "Caught between Bases." Coolness must be coupled with attention. One must know what he is about to do and why he does it.

Decision must also form part of the base run-

ner's education. He must learn to make quick decisions and then act without an instant's hesitation. We think we have advanced satisfactory reasons why it will be too late to reach a base when only half a second before there was plenty of time in which to do it. From this any person ought to be able to see *why* hesitation may be fatal in such cases, and also to see the value and necessity of cultivating decision of purpose.

Familiarity with the Rules.

We consider this qualification worthy of a special heading. Cases without number are continually occurring in amateur games where a base runner might take advantage of a mistake of greater or less importance on some technicality and take one and perhaps two bases without danger of being put out, if he was only a little more familiar with the rules. A good illustration of this is found in the case of a "block" (Rule 35). If the pitcher happens to be ignorant of this rule a base runner may score a good point in his own favor. It is also a self-evident fact that the base runner should be thoroughly acquainted with the rules in order that he, himself, be not betrayed into any indiscretion which would result disastrously for him. He should have them at his tongue's end, as it were, in order that he may know just what to do as well as what *not* to do. This applies to players in all other positions as well: but since we are conversing with base runners we direct our remarks especially to them. Familiarity with the law is the principal reason why a good lawyer has an advantage over a poor one. Having the law in his mind he is able to take instant advantage of any mistake of his opponent who has the law only in his books. It is the same in Medicine, it is the same in Theology, in short it is the same in everything. Familiarity with one's business is what makes him master of it. Unfamiliarity with his business or profession puts any person in the position of the pupil instead of the master. For this reason the would-be expert base runner should thoroughly commit the rules

to memory, reviewing them frequently to keep them fresh in his mind; and anyone who cannot see the advantages to be gained by so doing is blind indeed.

Readiness for Instant Action.

The foregoing has been devoted more to arguments and theories than to practical work; and we will suppose that the reader has carefully digested what has already been said. We will now place him at the bat and at the same time call his attention to the heading of this article. It is not our object to consider him as a batsman any longer than about to make a hit or his final strike. We will suppose that he has only one strike left him and that the pitcher is about to deliver the ball. He must have the idea firmly impressed on his mind that if he strikes he must drop his bat and start for first base instantly, whether he hits the ball or not, without looking around to see if the ball has been caught by the catcher. The delay occasioned by so doing often puts a man out when the last strike has been missed by the catcher, when if he had not thus looked around to see if there was any use in running he might have reached his base in safety. If a hit is made which yields one base easily but which makes reaching another, doubtful, the base runner has a good opportunity for exercising his judgment as to whether he can make it or not. But time is now precious and he must decide what to do instantly. If his decision is favorable for making the attempt he should start for the next base at the top of his speed, remembering that half a second of time may decide the matter. If he thinks that he cannot make it he should act accordingly; but whatever he does he must act with great promptness especially if he decides to run.

Leading Off.

This is a very important topic. We will suppose that the base runner has reached first base in safety. He must now start away from the base toward second base as far as is consistent with safety. The

position of the body in taking a "lead" is an important factor. That assumed by Walter A. Latham, the renowned professional, whose portrait, showing him in the act of "leading off," appeared in Reach's "Guide" in 1888, exactly agrees with our own idea of how it ought to be done. We refer the reader to the engraving in question; and those of our readers who have preserved the copy of the "Guide" for that year should study the engraving carefully. It shows him just leaving the base with his feet well separated, the knees considerably bent, the body leaning well forward, and the arms in a position well calculated to serve the purposes of a balancing pole. The entire picture shows the player in a sort of crouching or stooping position. The stooping position of the body enables the base runner to spring much more quickly in either direction than if he stood upright. In taking a "lead" he should not advance slowly and *steadily* away from the base as such a proceeding is almost certain to invite a throw from the pitcher to the baseman; but he should advance with a sort of hopping or springing motion, his weight nearly evenly distributed on both feet (since by so doing he can more easily and quickly return should he so desire) and after proceeding a few feet toward second base he should return part of the distance at least, and if he sees that the pitcher is giving him more than his share of his attention it would be well for him to return the entire distance. The return should be made in the same manner as the advance (unless the pitcher throws to the base)—with a sort of springing motion—and while thus vibrating back and forth he will always be in good form either for advance or retreat, and at the same time he will create in the pitcher's mind the idea that it will be of no use to try to catch him by throwing to the base. If the base runner is perfectly certain that the pitcher is not watching him he need not retreat at all; but he *should* retreat every time the pitcher looks in his direction. Perhaps these directions for procedure will not meet the views of some—we presume they will not—but they are those which we have always followed and we can conscientiously say that as a base runner we were usually more than ordinarily successful.

This statement is not made in a spirit of egotism or conceit, nor for the purpose of boasting; but simply to show that the above directions are based on experience and are of real value, and are not empty theories.

“How much of a ‘lead’ should be taken?” is naturally the next question. An exact answer which shall hold good in every instance cannot be given since it depends wholly on existing circumstances. In some instances in amateur games a “lead” of fifteen feet may be safe. In others a “lead” of six might be very dangerous. A base runner who is watchful and attentive can safely take a greater “lead”—other things being equal—than one who is not. He can also take a greater “lead” with safety to himself when a careless or inattentive pitcher is occupying the “box” than when this latter position is filled by an expert. Some pitchers make it a point to try to catch base runners napping at every opportunity offered. Others very seldom throw to a base. This fact would materially affect the amount of “lead” the base runner could safely take. As a rule, pitchers who are swift and accurate throwers are more apt to thus try to catch a base runner, than one who is a poor thrower and who is aware of his failing. Our own observations are, that, in throwing to bases, the advantage, on the average, is largely in favor of the base runner; yet a good pitcher will never neglect to do it if he thinks the circumstances justify his so doing. If he catches his man he has done a good thing (for himself); but if he throws the ball too high or too wide for the baseman to catch he could hardly have done a worse thing for himself or a better thing for the base runner. But this important point will be more fully discussed farther on. To return to the subject in question we can only say that the amount of “lead” a base runner can safely take is governed entirely by the conditions of each individual case; and for that reason the base runner must be his own judge as to what is safe for him to do.

Watching the Pitcher.

We give the above heading to this topic for the

sake of brevity, although the topic itself will include more than the heading indicates.

A popular contemporaneous writer on this subject remarks as follows: "One difficulty a base runner, trying to steal to second, invariably encounters, is his having to watch either the pitcher or catcher closely. He cannot watch both carefully and therefore he must make his selection as to which player he will look after. If the catcher is an accurate and swift thrower to bases, he is the man to be attended to. But if the pitcher is one who has a method of delivery which includes a number of special movements which occupy more than the ordinary time in delivering the ball, then he is the man to watch, for he will surely afford the runner the required opportunity to steal a base or to secure a balk, if the runner only plays his part properly."

Most of the arguments of this author in his different works on our national game, are, in our opinion, based on good judgment and sound common sense: but we are free to say that if we understand his *meaning* in *this* case we do not understand his *logic*. He seems to carry the idea that the base runner should first determine which man should be watched and then rivet his attention on *him* to the utter exclusion of everyone else. If this is the idea he intends to convey we do not hesitate to say that we consider it poor logic. For instance suppose the pitcher is the man he determines to watch, why should he continue to concentrate his attention on him *after* he has delivered the ball into the hands of the catcher? Is not the latter the man to watch now? What harm can befall the base runner from the pitcher so long as the catcher holds the ball? Again, suppose the base runner concludes to devote his attention to the catcher, what harm can come to him from this individual so long as the *pitcher* holds the ball? Again, suppose the ball has been hit to center field, why should he continue to watch *either* pitcher or catcher? Is not the *fielder* the proper person to engage his attention now? The author, just quoted, seems to have expressed himself in plain English, but if we have unwittingly placed any misconception on his meaning we take the

present occasion to ask his pardon for the severe criticism. Our own views, recapitulated, are as follows: while the pitcher holds the ball watch *him*; while the catcher holds it watch *him*; and while a fielder holds it watch *him*. In short, give your attention to the man who holds the ball, no matter who he may be. No one who does *not* hold it can do you any harm. Since the pitcher stands nearer the bases, and, as a rule, has the ball more of the time than does the catcher, we think that he can fairly be considered the more dangerous of the two to the base runner. However, a swift and accurate thrower behind the bat is always a source of danger to a base runner who does not attend strictly to business, especially while at first base. But for our part we consider it to be an act of inexcusable carelessness for a base runner to allow himself to be caught napping in this way at all.

A splendid point to play at this time if the base runner be an expert, is to purposely go so far from the base as to tempt the pitcher or catcher to throw to the base to put him out. This feat or ruse, requires nice calculation on the part of the base runner in order that he may get back to the base in time. The object of this ruse is to induce the pitcher or catcher to make the throw, hoping that it may be so wild as to render the stopping of it by the baseman impossible. If the trick succeeds the base runner can easily make one, and perhaps in some instances, two bases. But it requires great caution on his part else his little joke may recoil on his own head. But whether it succeeds or not the chances are largely in his favor, and for this reason he should not hesitate to try it whenever the opportunity offers. In amateur games it will be found to be a feature of strategy not to be overlooked nor despised. Amateur pitchers, as a rule, are quite apt to throw wildly when suddenly delivering the ball to the base, and base runners should bear this fact in mind. But above all they must remember that when about to try this trick it won't answer to be talking with the baseman or a spectator, nor to let the attention wander for an instant from the man who holds the ball.

Holding a Base too Long.

This is something the base runner very frequently does. It is generally the result of inattention on his part, and the delay thus occasioned is often the means of preventing him from making an extra base. If the ball—a grounder—be hit into the out field, the base runner, who, we will suppose, is at first base, may think that, although it is apparent to him that he can easily make one base, the ball will be sure to be captured by the fielder in time to prevent his making two, and for this reason may take his own time in running down to second; and then—but too late—sees the ball fumbled by the fielder and that if he had been a little more prompt he might have reached third. A base runner must learn never to take anything of this nature for granted. If he hits, while at the bat, a ball which is stopped at once by the pitcher and by him thrown at once to first base, he should run instantly without waiting to see if the ball is stopped by either of them; for the throw to first may be a wild one and this would enable the runner to reach the base. There is another important reason why he should at least make the attempt. If he does not, the pitcher will make the throw at his leisure; but if he does, the pitcher will naturally use more haste; and anyone knows, or at least *ought* to know, that a ball is much more likely to be thrown wildly when haste is used, than when it is not. For these reasons the base runner should always act on the idea, in all such cases, that the chances are in his favor, until he is declared out by the umpire.

Stealing Bases.

This feat calls into active service all the good judgment, attention, confidence, coolness, and running powers the base runner possesses, and in our estimation it is the most important part of his work. To be able to steal bases successfully in spite of a vigilant pitcher and a powerful and accurate thrower behind the bat, is one of the fine arts in base ball playing. The successful stealer

of bases must know the value of half a second: he must be ever ready to take a risk but at the same time he must instinctively know the difference between a fair risk and foolhardiness; and he must learn to be decisive and to act instantly on his decisions. Hesitation will do him more harm in stealing bases than in any other part which he is called upon to perform.

In stealing bases the base runner is greatly favored by Rule 32, Section 1. He should take as great a "lead" from his base as is consistent with safety, and then at the very first motion of the pitcher to deliver the ball to the bat, he should be off like a shot for the next base. If the pitcher has a number of preliminary motions which he habitually uses in delivering the ball to the bat, the fact will be decided favorably for the base runner. But if, on the other hand, the preliminary motions be few—the ball being suddenly delivered—the base runner has less chance for stealing a base. He must remember, however, in either case, that, after he once starts, the free use of his legs is his only hope.

In stealing bases the runner must be very careful not to make the dash an instant too soon. If he does he stands a good chance of being put out. This starting too soon is usually the result of a misunderstanding of the motions of the pitcher by the base runner. He must remember that the motion of the pitcher which gives him his cue to start must be one which the pitcher habitually uses in delivering the ball to the bat and may be either of the hand or foot and in the ability to tell just when this motion is made, lies much of the skill of the expert base runner.

Sliding to Bases.

Many times in running from one base to another, it becomes necessary for the base runner to drop and slide the remainder of the distance in order to avoid being put out. This is a very valuable feature of Base Running, but it must be used with discretion. It probably is never indulged in except as a last resort to reach the base in safety. It is not presumable that the base runner

would indulge in it for mere pleasure. There are a few things connected with it which base runners should thoroughly understand before attempting to practice it. In the first place they must remember never to drop until they are absolutely sure that they can reach the base, since if they cannot do this they are sure to be put out, barring accidents. The position of the body in sliding in seems to be an important question at the present day. Some slide feet first, others head first. The latter style seems to be the more modern one of the two. Those who have practiced both claim that the base runner is much less liable to sustain injury when sliding head first than when sliding feet first. Latham, of the St. Louis team is an advocate of the head-first slide, and it is stated on good authority that he claims never to have sustained the least injury in so doing. The testimony of such a player is worthy of a high degree of credence and players can follow his example with much confidence. There are doubtless other base runners of high standing who slide feet first. It is quite probable that it is the same in this as it is in many other things, viz. that what will be a success with one will be a failure with another. Therefore base runners will do well to try both styles faithfully and then adopt that which comes most natural for them to use. As for their *respective* merits we cannot speak from experience since we always used the feet-first slide in cases where it became necessary to slide at all. The runner must remember that when he drops for a slide he should fall on his side or hip rather than on his face or back. The patent sliding pad materially reduces the danger of receiving injuries while sliding to bases.

Slackening Speed too Soon.

Many a base runner has been put out at a base just when he thought himself safe, not because he did not run fast enough but because he slackened his speed too soon. Now this is an item worthy of special study. Time and again have we seen runners thus put out when they might easily have made the base had they kept up their speed. There

is not the least particle of doubt in our mind that in most instances this slackening of speed is due to fear of over-running the base. With the rules as they now are, this fear is, to a certain extent, justifiable when the runner is approaching second or third base; but at home or first base, where over-running is allowable, it cannot be advanced as a good excuse. In regard to the rule applying to the over-running of bases our opinion so exactly accords with that of Mr. Chadwick that we quote his opinion in full from his "Art of Base Running."

He says: "The rule allowing the first base to be over-run was adopted in 1870 and it has become a permanent law of the game. The proposition now is to apply the same rule to the other bases, and there is everything to favor it. In the first place there is no doubt that allowing all the bases to be over-run will save many a sprained ankle and injured limb, while in no respect does it take from the interest of the game or lessen the amount of skill required in base play. There is not the least merit in putting out a player who has over-run second or third base, the skill of the baseman alone being shown in putting him out before he touches the base. In applying the rule to all the bases it will be best to require the player over-running second or third if not the first, to return and touch the over-run base. If the rule be not the same for all bases the umpire will find it difficult to decide points on second and third bases, which would not be the case if the base runner were required to return and retouch the base. Of course no base is over-run in the case of a home run, nor is the first or second base over-run on a three-base hit."

The above contains about all we would say on the subject. It is to be earnestly desired that the present rule will be changed soon, so as to allow all bases to be over-run alike. What is the use of requiring the base runner to run the risk of breaking a leg or his neck when the difficulty can be so easily obviated? Of course it will not do away with sliding to bases entirely, but it will decrease the frequency of the necessity of so doing.

Annoying the Pitcher.

An expert base runner can annoy a pitcher exceedingly sometimes if he desires to do so. The pitcher being one of the most dangerous foes that the base runner has to encounter, it is especially desirable to break up his composure and get him excited if possible. If the base runner succeeds in doing this, it will not only be a point gained in his own favor but also in that of the batsman for if the pitcher gets excited he cannot deliver the ball to the bat so effectively as if he keeps cool. One player should always aid another whenever he can, and especially should he do so when he is going to benefit himself at the same time. This ruse can be practiced by making feints without actually doing anything. But the expert base runner is always a source of annoyance to a greater or less extent, to a pitcher, whether he feints or not. Especially is this the case when the base runner is one who is well known to be an expert in stealing bases. For the pitcher will consider it his duty to keep his north-west eye on him in addition to his regular work: and this, with the continual expectation of the runner's stealing a base, will try his coolness to its fullest extent.

Mutual Assistance.

Two base runners can greatly assist each other in many instances if they only know how. For example, if one be on first base and the other on third, if the pitcher be inexperienced, the base runner at first can make a dash for second, and during the excitement and confusion consequent upon the attempts to put him out, the runner on third can get home. One or the other is certain to make his base: but it is more desirable to run this risk of being put out when it is to decide a close point, than at any other time. Of course the risk of one man's being put out always accompanies this ruse, but in many cases it is worth the sacrifice if there be any. One man is almost certain to be caught between bases, but this does not *insure* an "out" by any means, especially in amateur games. It would, perhaps, hardly pay to

attempt this dodge if two men are already out: as in that case, the pitcher, instead of trying to put out the man who is trying to get to second, might throw the ball to the catcher and put out the other runner at the home plate. In a majority of cases it would be best for the runner at first base to wait until the pitcher is in the act of delivering the ball to the bat or else until the catcher actually has it in his hands before making his dash for second, since by so doing, the risk of the runner at third being put out would be reduced to a minimum. *He*, then, would hardly start for the home plate until he saw that the ball had been thrown to the second baseman by the catcher. If the catcher holds the ball the other runner, of course, reaches second safely and neither man is put out.

Caught between Bases.

It is a very important thing to know what to do when placed in this very awkward position. The proportion of base runners who can safely extricate themselves with any degree of certainty when thus caught, is small indeed. The proportion, however, such as it is, might be considerably increased if base runners were a little better versed in the study of human nature. A runner, thus caught, is put out in hundreds of instances where there is little or no necessity for it. We do not wish to be understood as saying that the runner can escape every time, by any means, nor perhaps even in a majority of cases; but we *do* say that he might escape in many more instances than he does. Ninety per cent. of those who might escape but who are finally put out, lose their scalp because they are too slow. The base runner does not want to stand still—figuratively speaking—when thus caught, and allow the baseman who has the ball to walk up and put him out. Not at all. And yet this is about the way the average amateur base runner will do. On the contrary, when he finds himself thus surrounded he should make a rush for the baseman *who does not hold the ball* as if he intended to run straight through him. He should keep his eyes fixed on this individual's countenance and the expression of the face and the uplifting of

the hands will tell the runner when the ball has left the hand of the other baseman. It won't always do to look around to *see* when he throws it, for he may be close behind him. When he sees that the ball has been thrown he should instantly turn and make a similar rush in the direction of the other baseman. If the latter has approached pretty close this will be favorable for the base runner, since it will be necessary for the other baseman to make a quicker return of the ball to his companion before the base runner can get past him. The chances are, that, by the time the base runner has made two or three turns, the haste of the basemen in throwing the ball engendered by the rapid movements of the base runner, coupled with the fact that he is continually between them and thus interfering with their aim, will cause one or the other of them to make a wild throw and then, of course, the base runner easily reaches his base. On the other hand, if the runner moves as if he was tired the basemen can perform their part at their leisure and the result is that the runner is almost certain to be put out. The runner should remember that the old saying, "The more haste, the less speed," fits this case like a duck's foot in the mud, but that it applies to the *basemen* and not to him. Of course he *can* overdo the matter; but he will not if he exercises a reasonable amount of coolness. In making the sudden turns above referred to, he should not wait until the ball is actually in the hands of the baseman in front unless he is pretty certain that the said baseman is only making a *pretense* of catching the ball—something which he can easily do if he thinks of it. For the benefit of basemen we take this occasion to state that this latter was always a favorite trick of our own while covering a base; and we never could repress a smile on seeing the base runner turn and run directly into the arms of the other baseman as we glanced expectantly behind the runner and raised our hands to catch a ball which had not been thrown.

From personal experience we are enabled to say that these directions for procedure when caught between bases will usually be found to be very successful, especially in amateur games. Profes-

sionals will be less likely to become rattled and thus allow the base runner to get past: but in either professional or amateur games it will be found to be the best plan of operations to follow. At the same time remember that we do not claim *infallibility* for it.

Running on a Fly Ball.

Mr. Chadwick says: "In running bases on fly balls caught in the out field, the moment such high ball is hit, and there is any chance of its being caught, he should hold the base he occupies, and in such a way as to be ready to start quickly for the next base the moment the ball is caught, and not run half way down, first, only to have to return and touch the base he left, after the ball is caught, before he can run to the next base."

Now is this good advice? Is it not the exception instead of the rule? Is it not better to advance as far from the base as is consistent with safety in case the ball *is* caught, so that, in case it is *not* caught, the base runner will have only about one half the distance to run that he would have had if he had remained on the base he was occupying until he saw whether the ball was caught or not? Is it not a better plan to run the risk of having to return than to run the risk of failing to make the next base? We invite unprejudiced criticism. The liability of fly balls being caught does not amount to a certainty by any means, especially in amateur games. For this reason we question the wisdom of Mr. Chadwick's advice.

Forcing Off.

This is something of which the base runner should be very cautious when he is in a position to "force" another runner; and when he is in a position to be "forced" *by* another he should do his best to put an empty base between them. For this feature of the game we will prescribe the following rule: Whenever it becomes *necessary* to force a runner off his base, do it without a particle of hesitation; but *never* do it without it is necessary.

Running into Basemen.

This is something which we have frequently witnessed. In some cases it may become necessary or even unavoidable. In *such* a case it is bad enough, since serious or even fatal consequences might easily result. More than one fatal case is already on record. But for a base runner to run at full speed against a baseman, when there is no necessity whatever for his so doing—as we have occasionally personally witnessed—for the sole purpose of knocking him down and thus cause him to miss the ball which is being thrown to him, is a low, cowardly, and unmanly trick. There is no justification whatever for it, and nobody but a ruffian will ever do it. If, on the other hand, the baseman purposely gets in the base runner's way in order to make him stop or turn aside to avoid a collision and perhaps miss the base by so doing, he forfeits his right to immunity from injury and deserves to be knocked down. But the base runner should always bear in mind what the possible consequences of the collision may be and make the blow as light as he conscientiously can. We fancy that no one with a spark of humanity about him would care to be the author of a fatal accident.

Study of the Theory.

By this we mean thinking about it, meditating upon it. A person who has never given this principle any serious thought can scarcely realize the amount of benefit a person will derive from giving the subject in question - whatever it may be - his careful and frequent consideration. By studying up the theory, revolving the details in his mind, and originating conditions in his imagination, he becomes thoroughly conversant with its details and is enabled to put them at once into execution when he is brought face to face with practical work. This applies admirably to the present subject and no base runner who desires to excel should pass it lightly by as something unworthy of his notice. For further remarks on the same subject we refer the reader to the article "Meditation as a path to success" in our "Art of Batting."

Miscellaneous

CONVERSATION WITH A BASEMAN:—Never hold any conversation with a baseman. It takes your attention from the one to whom you should give it, to bestow it upon one to whom it should *not* be given. Remember that alertness and attention to business are cardinal virtues in the base runner and that their absence betrays the pupil and not the master. A good baseman will refuse to hold conversation with a base runner. Therefore learn a lesson from him.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ACCIDENTS:—The base runner should always hold himself in readiness to take instant advantage of any accident in his favor. So should any other player for that matter. In amateur games errors are frequent; and if the base runner is ever ready to take immediate advantage of them it will be a great point in his favor. For instance if he be at first base and the ball be thrown to the baseman too wildly for him to stop it, he should not wait to see how far it is likely to go but should start for second base without an instant's hesitation. We assume this particular case for the purpose of illustrating our exact meaning.

Conclusion.

In this "Art of Base Running" we have given directions how to proceed in certain cases. Contingencies will doubtless arise which these directions will not cover except in a general way and perhaps not even then. Circumstances always alter cases and the base runner must use his own judgment as to what is the proper thing to do in many instances. What will answer at one time may not answer at all at another; but it is our earnest wish that these directions, even if they do not develop the expert, may at least lay a solid foundation for future success.

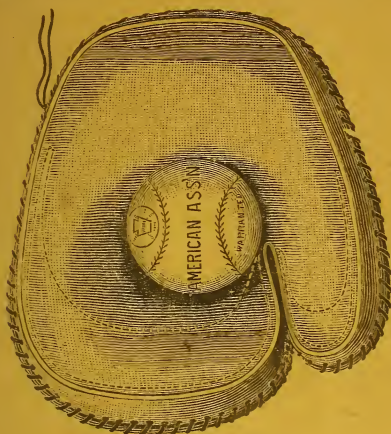
Note.

If those who read this work have never read the author's "Art of Curved Pitching" nor his "Art of

Batting" we strongly recommend that they procure and read them. They are not compilation of statistics nor of dry, uninteresting matter, but reliable, and, we trust, entertaining, works of instruction which contain not only clear and concise directions for acquiring the "Arts" which their names indicate, but also many valuable hints and suggestions for all classes of players. The former seems to be especially popular if we may be allowed to judge from its sales which have amounted to over sixteen thousand copies since its first appearance three years ago. The latter is a later but no less valuable work. They are published by A. J. Reach Co., Philadelphia, Penn., and will be sent by them by mail, postpaid, to any address, on receipt of fifteen cents each. The author of this work can also furnish them at the same price to all persons who would prefer to order through him.

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